

Members

Sen. Thomas Weatherwax, Chair
Sen. Kent Adams
Sen. James Lewis
Sen. Richard Young
Rep. Markt Lytle
Rep. Robert Bischoff
Rep. Richard Mangus
Rep. Phyllis Pond



NATURAL RESOURCES STUDY COMMITTEE

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Authority: IC 2-5-5-1

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: July 27, 2004
Meeting Time: 10:00 a.m.
Meeting Place: Fort Harrison State Park
Meeting City: Lawrence, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. Thomas Weatherwax, Chair; Sen. Kent Adams; Sen. James Lewis; Sen. Richard Young; Rep. Markt Lytle; Rep. Robert Bischoff; Rep. Richard Mangus; Rep. Phyllis Pond.

Members Absent: None.

Call to Order. Sen. Weatherwax called the meeting to order and asked Committee members to introduce themselves.

Overview of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). John Goss, DNR Director, provided an overview of the DNR activities. Thirty-five fee increases two years ago have generated about \$5-\$6 M in revenue that can be applied to the DNR operating budget. However, the DNR will revert approximately \$25-\$30 M. The DNR has scheduled significant increases in lake patrol dollars for local officers. Three to four counties have applied for funding to pay for overtime hours for local boat patrols. New dollars are available for invasive plant control, and the new point-of-sale system for licenses will be fully operational in September. Negotiations are still underway for the acquisition of 8,000 acres of wetlands at Goose Pond. Sixteen individuals have been appointed to the Lake Management Workgroup. The workgroup has met and prioritized issues. The group will share its recommendations with the Committee. An advisory council has been looking at issues concerning captive cervids. A report on captive cervids will be provided at the next meeting.

Purchase of Licenses. Mickey James, DNR Deputy Director, reported on the DNR license purchasing system which currently requires licensees to provide social security numbers.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Deputy Director James indicated that the DNR would provide the Committee with a demonstration of the point-of-sale system at a future meeting.

Reconsideration of the 2003 Legislative Recommendations. Matt Hopper, DNR Legislative Liaison, provided an overview of proposals that the Committee considered in 2003. (See Exhibit I.) Proposals included technical changes to the off-road vehicle statute; the Historic Sites Fund (Exhibit II); DNR In-house construction (Exhibit III); the Pest Control Compact (Exhibit IV); and the elimination of the lifetime license (Exhibit VI).

Senior Discount Fishing Licenses. Glen Salmon, Director of the DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife, provided an overview of the proposed senior discount fishing license. (See Exhibit V.) Mr. Salmon explained that in order for the state to receive federal reimbursement for fishing licenses sold in Indiana, the DNR must assess consumers a fee that will cover the costs of producing the license. In Indiana a license costs the state \$2.25 to produce with \$0.75 remaining with the vendor. Net costs to seniors would equal \$3. Currently, the federal government reimburses the state \$6.60 for each license sold. Currently, those individuals who are age 60 through 64 pay \$14.25, while those 65 and over do not pay a fee.

Paula Yeager, Indiana Wildlife Federation, provided the Committee with a letter of support for the proposed senior licenses. Dick Mercier, Indiana Sportsman's Roundtable, also supported the proposal. A letter of support was also offered on behalf of the American Association of Retired Persons.

Clean Water Indiana (CWI). Sherman Bryant, Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, provided an overview of the work of the Indiana soil and water conservation districts. The districts are governed by five supervisors. In 1999, CWI received \$1 M from the Build Indiana Fund. In FY 03 about \$84M in requests for conservation programs went unfunded due to lack of funding. Only 12% were funded. The IASWCD would like to request that the General Assembly find permanent dedicated funding for CWI.

Garry Tom, IASWCD, spoke on behalf of the districts and in support of funding for CWI. Over 400 bodies of water in the state are classified as "impaired," meaning activities such as swimming or eating fish from the water are discouraged. Under CWI, the state has an opportunity to obtain up to \$8 from the federal government for each \$1 spent. Districts receive \$10,000 annually from the General Fund. Gene Weaver, IASWCD, specifically asked for a permanent funding source for CWI and asked that the topic be discussed at a future meeting.

Floodway Control Act. Tim Maloney, Hoosier Environmental Council, asked that the Committee consider reviewing any changes that may be needed to the state's Flood Control Act given recent flooding and construction in floodways.

Pioneer Cemeteries. John Molitor, Indiana Historic Landmarks, asked that the topic of pioneer cemeteries be placed on an upcoming agenda.

Upcoming Meetings. The Committee reviewed the tentative agendas for upcoming meetings.

Adjournment. Senator Weatherwax adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:30 p.m.